



Indiana-Michigan
Mennonite Conference

weLink

connecting the congregations of IN-MI Mennonite Conference

September 9, 2015



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Staff Updates

August offered numerous opportunities to connect with people from around conference. Leadership teams met at Amigo Centre the third weekend for the second annual leadership retreat. John Powell, Doug Kaufman and Dan Miller headed north for various reasons immediately afterward, and were all present for the closing service at Hilltop Fellowship in Petoskey on August 23. Even in the midst of marking the end of the congregation, there was celebration about the lives that have been touched and the ministry done there since 1950. A number of people who grew up in the congregation returned to be part of the events. If interested there are several pictures on our [Facebook](#) page.

John and Dan met with leaders of Grand Marais Mennonite to discuss their mission in the community and their questions about conference affiliation. It's a beautiful area, and the hospitality is good. Stop in for a visit when you head to the UP for vacation. John continued in the north for a week to connect with leaders in northern Michigan.

There have been Journey preparations, as September 11-13 is the fall Weekend

Learning Event. Several people who want to begin Journey will begin in February. Conference ministers offer leadership for various activities on Saturday. Who in your congregation would benefit from this conference-based leadership program? Indiana-Michigan has one person beginning this fall and several more that may begin in February. See the [Journey website](#) for more information.

Dan met with the Mid-States leadership group (Illinois, Ohio, IN-MI and Central District conference ministers and moderators). This has been a great time of sharing and learning from one another over the years. At this time both Illinois and Ohio are experiencing change in conference ministers, so we are holding lightly the future of this meeting to evaluate its ongoing usefulness.

Vanessa is coordinating activities for the office. When calling the office with a question, she is the person pointing you toward your answer. She sent the annual leadership forms earlier this fall. Has your congregation updated and returned the form? She is completing an updated directory which will go to the printer soon. She also continues to be more involved in the development of Gospel Evangel. The September/October issue should be in church mailboxes soon!

September 21 is a Pastor Sabbath Day. We don't often have conference-wide pastor gatherings. However, pastors often find themselves in the center of these anxious times and we felt it appropriate to call pastors together for a time of rest and renewal. We don't intend for this to be another business meeting. We want to see if we can live into a different way of being together, one that welcomes God's Spirit, one that is different than how we have gathered in the past. Please pray for the preparations and for the gathering itself.

Dan is beginning to attend area council meetings across northern Indiana and plans to be there quarterly. He also attended the annual retreat of youth ministers from across conference. Several good conversations have grown out of those times together.

Doug continues planning for his sabbatical which will be mid-January to Mid-April.

John Powell is opening conversations with Michigan pastors about the best way to organize for accountability and support as they seek to engage their communities. He has called a meeting for September 24 to begin this conversation in a face-to-face setting.

Seeking congregational stories for *Gospel Evangel*

Staff are always watching for stories of congregations being changed by mission.

This direction we've set for ourselves is sometimes bumpy and challenging, sometimes rewarding and nourishing. Stories of what is being learned and how it impacts congregational reality help everyone know we are not alone in the journey.

Seeking someone with experience in WordPress

Conference is looking for someone with knowledge and experience in WordPress that would be available to volunteer their time for occasional questions. If you are interested, please contact the conference office at 534-4006 or imoffice@im.mennonite.net.

Financial Report

Thanks to your generous support, we are \$3,216 ahead of last year's contributions. Our expenditures are \$13,518 less than this time last year. August expenses were only \$426 more than income received. The financial picture is much more positive than at this time last year.

We appreciate your continued support as we "joyfully follow Jesus". Please consider adding support in one or more of these four ways: prayer, participation, funding and feedback.

-Jim Norton



Beginnings

Sunday, September 13, Doug Kaufman, Conference Pastor for Leadership Transition, will install and restart the license for Frank Kandel, transitional pastor at Mennonite Fellowship of Bloomington, Bloomington, IN.

Amigo Centre

- Join us September 18-20, 2015, for **MCC Bike Michiana**. Enjoy a weekend of riding, fellowship and raising funds for Mennonite Central Committee. Come join the bikers in riding between 70-100 miles over two days pedaling the beautiful lake and farmland region of southern Michigan and northern Indiana. Fellowship and worship included! If you are not a biker, consider donating on behalf of someone who is participating or become a sponsor. This year the project is raising funds for **Syrian Refugee Relief**. Brochures and additional information available online or call for details. <http://www.amigocentre.org/mcc-bike-michiana.html>
- Amigo Centre has one final **Scrapbooking, Crafting and Quilting Retreat** remaining for this year, December 4-6. We provide the opportunity to balance your productivity with time to rest, restore and refresh your body and soul. Registration is now available online. Check our web page or call for details. <http://www.amigocentre.org/scrapbooking-crafters-retreat.html>
- Ladies, mark your calendars for the annual **IN-MI Mennonite Women's (and girls!) Fall Retreat**, October 9-11 at Amigo Centre. The theme is "Growing (up) together in Christ" and the speaker will be Rachel Miller-Jacobs. This year we are encouraging young girls (grade 3 and above) to join us for a fun-filled weekend! Worship will be led by a Kim Schwartz along with Jen Gautsche and Sherry Beck from Locust Grove Mennonite Church. Packets have been sent. Information and registration available at: <http://www.amigocentre.org/in-mi-mennonite-womens-fall-retreat.html>
- Plan now to join us for all or part of **Celebrate Amigo**, October 16-18, 2015. This is your opportunity to "Celebrate, Enjoy and Support" Amigo at the peak of fall colors, as well as participate in various activities scheduled throughout the day on Saturday. As always, we will have a silent and live auction to raise funds for needed improvements. Please send your donated items or come to bid

and buy from the wonderful assortment of items that many so generously give. Without this additional financial support and God's blessing the Amigo ministry is not possible. Please consider joining us! Watch for more details to come.

<http://www.amigocentre.org/celebrate-amigo.html>.

· Save the date! **Pastoral Leadership Team Weekend** is scheduled for November 13-15, 2015. Our speaker this fall is Gilberto Flores, speaking on Soul Care. Brochures will be mailed soon! <http://www.amigocentre.org/pastoral-leadership-team-retreat.html>

Amigo Centre Winter Youth Retreats

Remember to save the date of Amigo Centre Winter Youth Retreats on your calendar.

Junior High Retreats: January 8-10 or February 12-14

Senior High Retreats: January 15-17 or February 19-21

Watch for additional details. We hope to see you here!

Bethany Christian Schools

Bethany Christian Schools, Goshen, will host class reunions and activities for its alumni and their families on Saturday, Sept. 26, for the following graduating classes: 1955, 1960, 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2005, and 2010. Reunion classes will meet Saturday afternoon/evening at Bethany for visiting and a catered dinner. Alumni interested in attending should register by Sept. 17. More details are available at www.bethanycs.net/reunions.

Alumni Night: Bethany Christian Alumni will receive free admission to tennis and volleyball matches on Thursday Sept. 17 (5:30 starts for varsity tennis and JV volleyball).

weLink connects IN-MI Conference congregations to each other, to the conference organizations Amigo Centre, Bethany Christian Schools and to the wider church. It is published on the second Wednesday of each month. *weLink* issues are archived on the conference website at im.mennonite.net/welink-archive/.

Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference

109 E. Clinton St., Suite 100 | Goshen, IN 46528

Phone: 574-534-4006 or 800-288-8486

Email: imoffice@im.mennonite.net | Website: im.mennonite.net



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